(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The project envisages construction of sorting platforms, auction hall, repair shed, administrative block, security room, locker room, canteen, water and power supply etc. including land acquisition at an estimated revised cost of Rs. 61.50 lakhs.

(c) The matter is under examination.

Minimum Selling Price to Chillies

2299. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal from Government of Andhra Pradesh to introduce minimum selling price to chillies; and

(b) if so, at what stage of consideration is the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government of Andhra Pradesh sent a proposal for purchase of chillies for market intervention Scheme. Market intervention price was fixed at Rs. 1500 per qtl. FAQ in consultation with the Government of Andhra Pradesh and a quantity of 10,000 metric tonnes of chillies has been purchased by Central and State designated agencies.

Small and Marginal Farmers

2300. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of small and marginal farmers at the end of sixth and seventh Five Year Plan;

(b) the details of schemes taken up for the benefit of these farmers;

(c) how far small and marginal farmers have been benefited by these schemes; and

(d) what are the schemes/programmes taken up for the benefit of these farmers during the Eighth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) According to 1985-86 Agriculture Census the number of small and marginal farmers (operational holdings) was as follows:

Small	1,79,2,000
Marginal	5,61,47,000
TOTAL	7,40,69,000

(b) to (d) To improve the conditions of small and marginal farmers Government have undertaken various schemes and programmes including poverty alleviation and crop oriented programmes. For example, subsidy has been provided to small and marginal farmers for getting fertilizer at concessional rates, under extension activities special attention is being paid to small and marginal farmers, they are also being benefited through various other programmes under Rural Development. In addition, in 1992-93 assistance was provided to States to create basic infrastructural facilities for small and marginal farmers. All the schemes mentioned above are plan schemes under the Eighth Five Year Plan.

Inclusion of Horticulture Product in the Crop Insurance Scheme

2301. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether insurance of horticultural products has also been included in the comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Inclusion of Cattle Wealth in the Crop Insurance Scheme

2302. SHRI S.S. SURJEWALA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce crop insurance/insurance scheme to

cover the cattle wealth, in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government has drawn any time frame for the introduction of the above scheme;

(c) whether the Government has framed a comprehensive crop insurance policy and the policy for the sheep and goats, fish and poultry in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Yes, the cattle insurance is already in progress in the country separately from the crop insurance. Cattle insurance was introduced in 1974 and covers cattle, sheep, goat, pigs, horses, mules, donkeys, yaks, camels and poultry, etc. While crop insurance scheme is in operation from 1-4-1985.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Cattle insurance is being implemented by the General Insurance Corporation of India through its subsidiary companies. Sheep, goats and poultry are included in the programme. The cattle insurance is under implementation throughout the country and efforts are on to increase the coverage.

Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme is an area based and credit linked scheme. It is voluntary in nature and the States are free to opt in favour of this scheme. The scheme covers wheat, paddy, millets, oilseeds and pulses. Under the scheme sum insured is equal to the crop loan disbursed subject to the maximum of Rs. 10,000 per farmer. Premium payable is 2% on wheat, paddy and millets and 1% on oilseeds and pulses of the sum insured.

Lock Out in the Sandal Agricultural Farm in Kerala

2303. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that employees of the Sandal Agricultural Farm in Aralam in Kerala State, under Central Government are on strike and the Farm has been closed down;

(b) if so, what are the reasons thereof and what are the demands of the employees and the details thereof;

(c) whether Government had a dialogue with the striking employees, if so, what are the details in this regard, and if not, when Government propose to call a meeting with the representatives of the striking employees in order to lift the lock-out; and

(d) whether there is any plan to close down the Farm permanently, if not, what action Government contemplates to put the Farm on rails again?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir. However, the Farm has not been closed down so far by State Farms Corporation of India (SFCI).

(b) The workers of Central State Farm of State Farm Corporation of India (SFCI), a Public Sector Undertaking under the administrative control of this Ministry, at Aralam, Cannanore, Kerala, proceeded on strike w.e.f. 19-4-1993 in support of fulfilment of the following main demands:

(i) Uniform pay-scales of labours working in Central State Farm, Aralam.

(ii) Appointment of casual workers as permanent workers.

(iii) Appointment of Head Workers as Group 'D' employees.

(iv) To develop the Central State Farm as an Agricultural University.

(c) The State Labour Commissioners's office (Government of Kerala) has been pursuing the matter in several rounds of discussions with representatives of Employees Union and the Management of the SFCI.

(d) There is no proposal to close the Aralam Farm of SFCI. The SFCI has been included under the World Bank aided National Seeds Project Phase-III (N.S.P. III), under which an action plan for increasing the efficiency of SFCI Farms has been drawn up and is being implemented.